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Special Libraries Association

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION



MENTORING
LIBRARIANS

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information outlook

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION



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Mentoring Librarians

Whether formal or informal, offered one-on-one or in groups, mentoring benefits everyone involved—as well as their employers.

BY STUART HALES

They're here. They're growing in number. And if you don't mentor them, they may not be with you and your library much longer.

"They" are Millennials, and as of early 2015, they comprise the largest share of the U.S. workforce. Their oldest members are now approaching 40, meaning they are beginning to occupy senior positions in businesses, government agencies, nonprofits—and libraries and information centers.

But unlike the Gen Xers they're joining and the Baby Boomers they increasingly are replacing, Millennials have little love for their employers. According to the 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey, 25 percent of Millennials—even those in management roles—were looking to leave their current employer within the coming year, and 44 percent within the next two years.

The reasons for this disconnect are rooted largely in Millennials' skepticism of the motivations and ethics of businesses. While they hold generally positive views of business, they feel that business leaders typically have no ambition beyond profit. This is true not just of Millennials in the United States—the Deloitte study found that in every country except Germany and South Korea, fewer than one-fifth of Millennials say

business success should be measured only in financial terms.

But Millennials' frustration with their employers runs deeper than just profit and loss statements; it also stems from a belief that their skills are not being utilized and that they are not being developed as leaders. Not surprisingly, employers that offer mentorships and other programs that support their workers' ambitions and professional development are more likely to retain them. The Deloitte survey found, for example, that workers who reported a desire to remain with their employers for five years or more were more than twice as likely to have a mentor than not.

But despite the impact of mentoring programs on worker retention rates, only about 30 percent of employers offer them, according to the Association for Talent Development. So-called "informal mentoring" programs are more prevalent, though mentoring initiatives of all stripes are less widespread in mature economies (such as France and Australia) than in emerging ones.

How can information professionals, especially those without formal programs in their workplace, take advantage of mentoring and its many benefits? This issue of *Information Outlook* offers several perspectives on that question:

an article explaining the advantages of mentorships and sponsorships, an article on the nuances of serving as a mentor, and seven personal "reflections" by SLA members who have been on both sides of mentoring relationships.

The central message of these perspectives is that mentoring is not something to be undertaken lightly, but its benefits—for mentors and mentees alike—far outweigh the time and effort it requires.

"None of us succeed on our own or learn and grow in isolation," writes Leslie Reynolds. "The people with whom you surround yourself will have a significant impact on your personal and professional success. The act of mentoring provides excellent opportunities to bring new people into your professional constellation and learn from them."

That sentiment is also evident in this issue's interview with SLA member Cynthia Sheffield. After joining SLA to help obtain advice on starting a library from scratch, she quickly developed a network of peers that she continues to learn from, and share with, to this today.

"I've made several meaningful friendships and had the pleasure of working with some of the most dedicated, creative, kind, and talented folks you would want to meet in librarianship," she says. "I should also note that, in essence, I got a whole fellowship in marketing from Chris Olson as she took me under her wing when I moved into leadership roles in the Maryland Chapter of SLA. That mentorship was extremely invaluable in so many ways."

In addition to mentoring, this issue includes how-to advice from David Stern on staying current with research in your field and from Karen White on using new-employee orientations to market your library or information center. And be sure to check "Inside Info" for news about the SLA 2018 Annual Conference!

STUART HALES is editor of *Information Outlook* and content director for SLA. He can be reached at shales@sla.org.



RESOURCES

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SLA 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Librarian of Congress to Keynote SLA 2018



Carla Hayden

Carla Hayden, the librarian of Congress and the first woman and first African American to hold that position, will deliver a keynote address on Monday, June 11, at the opening session of the SLA 2018 Annual Conference in Baltimore.



Sayeed Choudhury

Hayden, the first trained librarian to serve as librarian of Congress in more than 40 years, was appointed to her post by President Obama in 2016, succeeding James Billington. Prior to joining the Library of Congress, Hayden served as chief executive officer of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. She received the Librarian of the Year award from *Library Journal* in 1995 in recognition of the outreach services provided by the Pratt Library to the Baltimore community during her tenure.



Wes Moore

Hayden earned master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago. She was an assistant professor of library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh from 1987-1991 and served as president of the American Library Association in 2003-2004.

Hayden's address will be the first of three keynote presentations at SLA 2018. Sayeed Choudhury, the associate dean for research data management and the director of the Digital Research and Curation Center at the Sheridan Libraries at Johns Hopkins University, will deliver a keynote presentation on Tuesday, June 12. Choudhury serves on

the boards of the National Information Standards Organization and National Museum and Library Services and is the project owner for the Data Conservancy. He has written articles for the *International Journal of Digital Curation*, *D-Lib*, the *Journal of Digital Information*, *First Monday*, and *Library Trends*.

Wes Moore, an Army combat veteran and author who was born and grew up in Baltimore, will deliver the keynote address at the closing general session on Wednesday, June 13. A

White House Fellow who served as special assistant to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Moore was one of *Ebony* magazine's "Top 30 Leaders Under 30" in 2007 and *Crain's New York Business* "40 Under 40 Rising Stars" in 2009. His *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestseller, *The Other Wes Moore*, details the fascinating intersection of his life with that of another man by the same name—one ended up a Rhodes Scholar and decorated veteran, the other a convicted criminal. **SLA**

Education Program for SLA 2018 Unveiled

More than 100 education sessions, on topics ranging from bibliometrics to accessible design to data rescue, will be presented at the SLA 2018 Annual Conference in Baltimore.

The session titles and descriptions are available on the SLA 2018 website at <https://www.sla.org/attend/sla-2018-annual-conference/education-sessions/>. The sessions will be presented Monday, June 11, through Wednesday, June 13; the preceding weekend, continuing education and certificate courses will be offered.

The sessions being presented at SLA 2018 include the following:

Monday, June 11

Government Information Preservation on a Shoestring Budget
Reading Between the Lines: Document Delivery Best Practices
Data Analytics for Library Marketing
Emerging Technologies in Government Libraries: 3D Printing, Virtual Reality, and Beyond!
How Blockchain is Shaking up the Legal and Financial Services Global Neighborhood
Not Just for Fun: Virtual/Augmented Reality
Flight of the Drones: Emerging Uses of Industry-Changing Technology

Tuesday, June 12

Data Rescue: What Is Happening to Environmental Datasets?
Building Professional Literacy in Research and Scholarship
Keys to the Kingdom: Authentication and Access in the 21st Century
New Approaches to ROI: How to Talk About the Value of Information
3D Printing: Bringing Manufacturing Devices/Diagnostics into the Future Today
Data Management Planning: Case Studies
The Future of CI: What Does Tomorrow Hold?

Wednesday, June 13

Finding Corporate Registries and Navigating Them for Valuable Information
Open Access Publishing: Where Is It Headed?
Using Taxonomy to Drive Personalization: Aligning User Interests and Content Designing for Accessibility
Top 10 Tips for Online Competitive Intelligence
CI across Industries: Defining "Intelligence" and its Output
From Hype to Impact: 3-D Printing Services in Three Special Libraries
Climate Change Resources: 14 Sites in 60 Minutes
Bibliometrics as Patron Service and as Collection Development Tool

Mentors and Sponsors: Making the Most of Both

GUIDANCE FROM MENTORS, AND THE BACKING OF INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE, CAN HELP FURTHER YOUR CAREER AND OPEN DOORS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

BY TRISH FOSTER

The power of connections has been harnessed for years, but the importance of intentional mentorship and sponsorship is gaining more attention from organizations looking to develop talent and professionals deciding how to advance their careers. The *Harvard Business Review* reported that, in managing today's winding career paths, the need for mentoring is greater than ever (Gallow 2011). For women and minorities, such relationships can have particularly significant impacts on workplace experience and career success.

To get the most out of sponsors and mentors, however, it is important to first recognize the similarities and differences between the two, which often get confused. Simply put: mentors build you up, sponsors move you forward.

Both sponsors and mentors offer guidance, make introductions, and provide feedback. Sylvia Ann Hewlett,

founder and chief executive officer of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), describes a mentor as someone who gives valuable career support and advice, builds self-esteem, and provides a sounding board (Hewlett 2013). Most often, mentoring relationships are not visible within the organization and are driven by the needs and goals of the mentee.

Sponsors, on the other hand, invest in their protégés and directly advocate for their advancement. The relationship is reciprocal in that the sponsors, who typically are senior leaders or influencers who have the ear of management, put their own reputations on the line by publicly promoting their protégés. Sponsors help move you forward by—

- recognizing your talent and helping you recognize your own potential;
- making you visible to senior management;

- connecting you to opportunities;
- speaking to your strengths; and
- making a case for your advancement.

The Mentor

Mentoring can be both formal and informal in nature and can take several forms, including the following:

- **Traditional one-on-one mentoring.** In a traditional mentoring arrangement, a senior person typically acts as a role model and advisor to a junior person. According to Catalyst, this approach is best for facilitating long-term relationships (Giscombe 2012).
- **Peer mentoring.** Peer mentoring is a one-on-one relationship “between hierarchical peers whose roles may or may not vary by function and technical expertise.” This approach offers a more relaxed environment for knowledge exchange and social support (Giscombe 2012).
- **Mentoring circles.** A circle is a form of mentoring in which one mentor meets with a group of mentees. This approach uses time and people efficiently and closely mirrors the work



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team structure (Giscombe 2012).

- **Reverse or reciprocal mentoring.** In reverse or reciprocal arrangements, a junior person mentors a senior person, or the mentorship is mutual. This format helps senior leaders stay in touch with their younger workers, maintain relevance, and broaden diverse perspectives. Areas of focus can include technology, social media, leadership, workplace culture, and trends (Giscombe 2012; Ryan 2017).
- **Developmental networks/multiple mentors.** Networks provide you with a small group of contacts uniquely qualified to assist you in a specific area of development. You can turn to those in your network as you would a mentor, benefitting from multiple sources of input (Kram and Higgins 2009).
- **One-minute mentoring.** Notwithstanding the established benefits of formal mentoring programs, successful mentoring does not have to entail a big commitment. In their

2017 book *One Minute Mentoring*, Ken Blanchard and Claire Diaz-Ortiz make the case for mentorship in the form of brief but regular conversations.

Research by Catalyst, an organization dedicated to building “workplaces that work for women,” indicates that when mentoring relationships are left to develop informally, women often encounter gender-based obstacles (including decreased access to potential mentors) that keep them from reaping the rewards of mentorship (Dinolfo and Nugent 2010). Fortunately, formal mentoring programs can help level the playing field. When curating mentoring matches for employees, organizations benefit from diverse pairings across boundaries such as gender, generation, professional seniority, and nationality/location (Dinolfo and Nugent 2010).

The research on whether women benefit more from partnering with male mentors or female mentors is not clear-cut, and arguments can be made for each. Some research indicates that women shouldn’t limit themselves to

female mentors and that it may be in their best interests to find a male mentor, particularly when working in a male-dominated industry. For women in STEM fields, however, studies paint a different picture. A University of Massachusetts study found that female students who were assigned female mentors had distinctly better results than those who were assigned male mentors, even though each group’s mentorship structure and time frame were the same (Dennehy and Dasgupta 2017). Seeking the person with the best experience, seniority, and willingness to invest in the relationship might be more critical than worrying about gender.

The Sponsor

Traditional sponsorship entails a formal relationship in which a senior influencer actively advocates for a less senior but high-potential professional, thereby opening doors to promotions, “reach” assignments, and powerful networks (Elliker 2015). Sponsoring relationships generally last about six years and span career transitions, although a boss, senior colleague, or established acquaintance could engage in a one-time sponsorship by advocating for an internal or external professional opportunity, with or without the person’s knowledge (Fucci 2016). An individual can also have multiple sponsors, an arrangement that offers access to diverse opportunities, viewpoints, and advocacy.

The impact of sponsorships on professional development is well-established, and much of the available information focuses on the payoff for younger professionals. Research conducted by CTI demonstrates that good sponsors set talented professionals on the “path to power and influence” by leveraging three key factors: pay raises, high-profile assignments, and promotions (Hewlett 2013).

The influence of sponsors is significant because studies show that the majority of both women (70 percent) and men (67 percent) are hesitant to ask their boss for a raise, whereas



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tinyurl.com/yabk2cs4

sponsored women are more likely to request pay increases and “stretch” assignments than unsponsored women (Hewlett et al. 2010). Additionally, 70 percent of sponsored men and 68 percent of sponsored women report satisfaction with their pace of professional progression, while only 57 percent of their unsponsored peers report the same (Hewlett 2013). *Harvard Business Review* research goes so far as to conclude that promotion to top jobs depends on sponsorships (Hewlett et al. 2010).

Closer examination of the research reveals key differences in the way sponsorships affect women’s career trajectories and those of mothers in particular. CTI studies found that “85 percent of mothers (employed full-time) who have sponsors stay in the game, compared to only 58 percent of those going it alone” (Hewlett 2013).

As with mentoring, the case can be made for women to choose both male sponsors and female sponsors. In a study published by the *Harvard Business Review*, 46 percent of women surveyed expressed a preference for male sponsors, citing men’s superior networks as the reason. On the other hand, 31 percent of women in the same study felt that senior men were either unavailable or unwilling to mentor them, and 30 percent pointed to the potential for attraction in one-on-one male-female relationships as a roadblock to productivity (Hewlett et al. 2010).

The Search

Aspiring protégés shouldn’t limit themselves to a single mentor or sponsor. Remaining open to multiple relationships increases your access to different sources of knowledge and advice.

When finding a mentor, it pays to look beyond the obvious places. In addition to your immediate professional and personal networks, consider community groups and service organizations, some of which offer their own business mentoring programs (Hewlett 2013). While professional associations offer an opportunity to connect with some-

one in your field, forging a mentoring relationship across industry lines frees it from the subtle pressures that inevitably result from working with someone within your field (Cardinal 2015).

Try to find a mentor with knowledge and skills you don’t already possess. Tammy Tibbetts, founder and president of She’s The First, recommends finding someone outside your organization. It is also wise to focus on finding someone with the expertise to complement the experience or knowledge you lack, rather than choosing someone with whom you get along well (Diversity Woman 2018).

Before pitching a potential mentor, ask yourself whether you are someone people would want to mentor. Workboard CEO Deidre Paknad (2016) notes that the relationship needs to feel like a good use of her energy, since her time is limited. “When I’m mentoring someone, I need to see where I can add value,” she says. You should also be clear about what you want out of the relationship (Warrell 2017).

Whereas a mentoring relationship is driven by the mentee, a sponsoring relationship is driven by the sponsor. And unlike a mentorship, you do not find a sponsorship—you earn it—and a sponsor likely finds you (Huang 2016).

As a protégé, leading with how you can help the other person is vital. Establish your reliability by performing well and consistently exceeding expectations, both at work and in outside endeavors.

A sponsor is likely to be someone within your organization, and may well be someone within your chain of command. In fact, 30-40 percent of sponsors are direct managers, and 20 percent happen to be your boss’s boss (Elliker 2015).

When it comes to your career, it is helpful to have the guidance of people around you. It is even better to have the backing of influential people who will speak up on your behalf. By cultivating mentors and sponsors, your career can benefit from both types of support. **SLA**

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Getting Started as a Mentor

MENTORING STUDENTS OR CURRENT LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS CAN BE AS REWARDING FOR YOU AS IT IS FOR THOSE YOU NURTURE AND SUPPORT.

BY HOLLY LAKATOS, MLS

Librarianship is a profession of collaborators. We work with patrons to obtain facts and useful information; we work with C-suite executives to develop policies for ethically sourcing and using our products; and we work with other cultural institutions to preserve and share knowledge. We also work with students and other librarians to promote individual success and a stronger profession.

This last type of collaboration, known as mentoring, can be the most rewarding for any information professional. I have personally benefited from the guidance and advice of several mentors over the course of my career, especially the wisdom of the late Roy M. Mersky and Dr. Yvonne Chandler. Leading by example, they taught me how to be a mentor/coach/counselor and were my cheerleaders when I needed support.

I have also been lucky enough to mentor and coach new librarians, library students, and other researchers, each of whom helped me strengthen my own skills while helping me find joy in my day-to-day work. Now, as part of the Solo Librarians Division of SLA, I am participating in a group that is creating a formal mentoring/coaching project, known as the Virtual Colleagues Program, for solo librarians who may not have the onsite resources or professional networks to find mentors and coaches.

Mentoring, Coaching, and Counseling

The word *mentoring* is sometimes used as an umbrella term to describe all professionally nurturing activities that support newer librarians. As such, it may actually describe traditional mentoring, coaching, or counseling. The ultimate

goal of each of these practices is to empower a worker and provide context, training, and encouragement that will ultimately lead to self-awareness and self-sufficiency. Each practice may use similar tools and techniques, but understanding their subtle differences may help a prospective mentor, coach, or counselor develop a stronger foundation to assist the next generation.

Traditional *mentorship* programs seek to establish long-term relationships between a wiser and more experienced colleague who guides the growth and development of a newer or less experienced worker. This guidance tends to take a long-range view and does not focus on short-term problems or dispense “how to” advice (Reh 2017). Mentorship programs usually flourish in corporate and academic environments where the institutional culture supports such efforts. These one-on-one programs may be formal or informal, long-term or short-lived. Relationships may be top-down, bottom-up, peer-to-peer, or virtual (Zachary 2012).

Conscientious mentoring is time consuming and can be burdensome or even emotionally draining (Howland 2002). Successful mentors start with a strong desire to serve and willingness to invest energy into what could become a

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lifelong connection with another professional. Successful mentors also have relevant professional experience and well-developed communication skills (Dragovich and Margeton 1995).

Coaches are facilitators who empower others by listening, asking questions, shifting perspectives, and providing feedback (Ellinger 2013). The coaching relationship is a limited-duration, problem-based connection that seeks to overcome obstacles, improve competence, and resolve conflict. The coach

health professionals to help them work through these issues, peer counselors can be useful in improving general morale and helping solve simple interpersonal disputes.

Counselors can coach. Coaches can mentor. Mentors can counsel. The lines are blurred. If you are a seasoned professional who wants to participate in a nurturing relationship, the best practice is to anticipate that you will be called upon to be all three at some point.

ed. Academic librarians who are mentored tend to produce more research that gets published in reputable journals (Yusuf 2011). Special librarians (especially those in one-person libraries) who participate as mentors or mentees may feel more connected to the profession and better informed about information trends (Ptolomey 2008). SLA's Competencies for Information Professionals (2016) include mentoring as an enabling competency that is vital for professional success and career development.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor to an information science student, you can start by reaching out to your nearest library school, your alma mater, or a distance education coordinator for one of the many accredited distance education programs.

may have more or less overall experience than the "student" librarian or worker, but the coach should possess a better understanding of the issues, tools, and skills needed for success in this specific realm.

A successful coach starts with a fundamental understanding of various learning styles and helps the student create a roadmap that progresses step by step through a challenge. Together, coach and student set goals, measure performance, and assess progress. The ultimate goal of the coaching relationship is to teach the student how to solve his or her own problems through a new way of systematic thinking (Tyson and Birnbrauer 1983).

Counselors focus on emotions and provide insights into performance. Generally, counselors explore how a worker's past is affecting present performance and seek to identify the underlying causes of workplace conflicts. Although many workers who need counselors should seek out mental

Mentoring as a Professional Development Activity

Most of the positive aspects of mentoring (on both sides) are related to the "human resources" facets of job performance, such as productivity, motivation, and the spread of institutional culture. Organizations that support mentoring programs may be able to "grow" future managers through apprenticeships, while individuals who participate in such programs may develop communication and leadership skills.

Studies have shown that the most beneficial and longest-lasting mentoring relationships are those that develop naturally and are flexible enough to change over time (Field 2001). Mentors provide newer librarians with guidance and support while allowing experienced librarians to remain relevant as the profession embraces the changing world of information (Jones-Quartey 2000).

The benefits of mentoring programs for both mentors and mentees (also known as protégés) are well document-

Mentoring Students v. Newer Professionals

Information science students who have never worked in a professional information center may not understand how libraries work "behind the scenes" or the roles librarians play in an organization. New librarians, for their part, may not be familiar with the institutional history of their organization or understand how their work affects others within the organization. Sometimes, these prospective mentees will seek a mentor, coach, or counselor.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor to an information science student, you can start by reaching out to your nearest library school, your alma mater, or a distance education coordinator for one of the many accredited distance education programs (Dragovich and Margeton 1995). Many library schools require students to interview librarians in various settings to compare and contrast policies, procedures, and professional attitudes. In addition, some students may want to volunteer or work in your library so they can gain hands-on experience.

Many library school internship coordinators require a site visit and a learning plan to ensure that the potential course credits meet educational standards. This means you must have an internship project outline that demonstrates professional learning, or you must be willing to assign professional-level work that will provide valuable hands-on experience.

Newer librarians at your organization

may benefit from an informal sympathetic ear or an “in the moment” coach. You can assist these librarians by being discrete and non-judgmental and helping them overcome any problem they’re having. One positive experience with you may lead a newer librarian to seek your counsel or assistance when future problems arise.

If you do not want to be a mentor, coach, or counselor, you can set boundaries and manage expectations. Extend professional courtesy to your new colleagues by being honest and stating that you cannot help, but also be a good librarian by suggesting alternate sources of assistance.

Larger organizations (like academic libraries or the Solo Librarians Division) may have formal mentoring programs in place. Joining such a program usually involves completing an application and being matched with a prospective mentee by a program coordinator. The

program coordinator will usually consider your professional experience, your reasons for wanting to be a mentor, and your schedule.

When matched with a prospective mentee, take the time to develop goals with your mentee so you can begin your new relationship on solid footing. Start the conversation by asking questions about your mentee’s education, experience, and expectations. If the program has a definitive time frame, talk about short- and long-term goals that may be achievable within that time frame. Offer suggestions when warranted, but unless you’re the mentee’s direct supervisor, try to refrain from telling the mentee what you think he or she should do or pointing the mentee in a specific direction. The ultimate goal, remember, is to help a new professional develop the skills necessary to be self-aware and self-sufficient.

Regardless of whether you’re involved

in a formal or informal relationship, the responsibility for making the partnership successful belongs to both you and the mentee (Wilson and Elman 1990). The mentor-mentee relationship will not be static over your lifetime; it will change as you and your mentee both grow and gain new skills and new responsibilities (Wilson and Elman 1990).

As a mentor, coach, or counselor, you can lead by example. Your relationship will benefit from helping your mentee learn to take personal responsibility for upholding professional standards, understand the consequences of not following through with projects, and share praise for a job well done. You can also demonstrate active listening skills and how to take constructive criticism by soliciting feedback from your mentee on your performance as a mentor.

Generational differences may lead to some miscommunication and/or misun-

GENERAL MENTORING TIPS

Ideally, the mentoring relationship will prove to be as beneficial for you as a mentor as it is for the person you mentor. This list of dos and don’ts will help ensure that both of you get the most out of the relationship.

- When asked to participate in a mentoring or peer coaching program, do so only if you are truly interested in helping students and newer librarians.
- Set aside dedicated time for establishing a relationship with your mentee.
- Honor any commitments you make to your protégé after agreeing to be a mentor, coach, or counselor. Don’t make commitments, then “flake out” because you’ve over-committed yourself.
- Be thoughtful and honest when providing feedback. Try not to be flippant, condescending, or sarcastic or communicate through stereotypes.
- Understand your own strengths and shortcomings related to communication, technology, and learning.
- Provide “no strings attached” advice that is meant only to help your mentee.
- Be discrete. Don’t share confidences with your mentee (no matter how tempting) that break confidentiality understandings you have with your employers, colleagues, family, or friends.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself and your mentee. When helping your mentee set goals, consider making them specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.).

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derstandings, as technological advances and cultural influences have shaped personal and professional experiences in different ways (Schullery 2013). Librarians should generally be aware of these dissimilarities because of their impact upon patron services. Working with someone from a different generation in a mentoring relationship may allow you to explore these differences up close and obtain a deeper understanding of how the mentee perceives the profession.

If your mentee makes you feel like you are wasting time and you cannot coach or counsel him or her into exhibiting professional enthusiasm, simply end the relationship as courteously as you can while acknowledging any progress that has been made or obstacles that you could not overcome. If it's not working, it's not worth your time or effort.

Building Your Network

Even if you are an experienced and competent librarian, you may benefit from shifting roles from mentor to mentee several times over the course of your career—for example, when you start a new role within the library, adopt a new technology, or take on additional leadership responsibilities within the profession (Jones-Quartey 2010). Another advantage of shifting roles is that it will introduce you to a variety of individuals you may not otherwise get to know. Keeping in touch with this broad group of professionals inside and outside your organization will strengthen your support network, to the point that it can become a lifeline during times of professional crisis. These relationships can be cultivated through several means—phone calls, e-mails, holiday cards, and in-person socialization at librarian conferences—and will provide connections that you can draw upon when the need arises. **SLA**

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HAVE YOU EVER PARTICIPATED IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP OR PROGRAM? ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, SEVEN SLA MEMBERS SHARE THEIR MENTORING EXPERIENCES.

None of Us Succeed On Our Own

BY LESLIE J. REYNOLDS, MLIS



Leslie Reynolds is an associate professor and interim dean of libraries at the University of Colorado Boulder. She can be reached at leslie.reynolds@colorado.edu.

Have you ever been on either side of a mentoring relationship? If you answered “no,” take a moment and think carefully. Many people who mentor you (or whom you mentor) may go by a different name, such as advisor, coach, teacher, colleague, or friend.

Anyone, at any career stage, can benefit from a mentoring relationship. Being a mentor means providing a constructive, non-threatening environment to encourage someone who has asked for your advice or assistance. To find a mentor, you must be comfortable asking for help from someone with the experience, skills, and knowledge you want to develop in yourself.

When I started my first tenure-track position at Purdue University, a member of the library administration told me to pick a tenured librarian as a mentor. I had no idea how to choose the right person to provide helpful advice, so I took the easy route and asked a person I had already met. This individual was friendly and helpful, but I learned her advice was not representative of what other members of the tenure committee would have said if I asked them similar questions. Luckily, I figured this out early and found additional informal mentors to help me. I continued to meet with my formal mentor and listen to her advice, but she became one of several voices I considered to achieve my goals.

This experience has led me to advocate for (1) formal mentoring arrangements that are time-based, such as 1-2 years, and (2) mentor-protégé pairings that change at the end of that interval, so the protégé regularly benefits from a different mentor’s perspective. I would also advise supplementing formal mentoring relationships with multiple informal mentors. Informal mentors are those from whom you seek opinions and advice but have not asked to serve in a formal mentoring capacity.

In my experience, the best mentoring relationships are those in which everyone listens with empathy, shares experiences, and encourages others to improve and develop. In my current organization (the University of Colorado Boulder), we have a formal mentoring model that pairs cohorts of faculty with at least two mentors. The cohorts and their respective mentors meet as a group approximately six times per year; at the end of the year, each cohort is paired with a new set of mentors.

Last year, my mentoring group consisted of untenured librarians who are also supervisors. While the expectation of our library faculty mentoring committee is that mentoring is primarily focused on promotion and tenure requirements, our conversations frequently went beyond those topics into management challenges. It was during those conversations that I was introduced to Gretchen Rubin’s *The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles that Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People’s Lives Better, Too)*, which led to a lively discussion about teamwork in the library.

None of us succeed on our own or learn and grow in isolation. The people with whom you surround yourself will have a significant impact on your personal and professional success. The act of mentoring provides excellent opportunities to bring new people into your professional constellation and learn from them. **SLA**

Giving Back to the Library Community

BY JAMES KING, MLIS



James King is the branch chief and information architect at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Library. He can be reached at james.king@nih.gov.

I've had the pleasure of serving as a mentor multiple times during my career and found all of them to be extremely beneficial. Recently, I've mentored two members of the National Library of Medicine Associate Fellowship program, a competitive program designed to prepare librarians for future leadership roles in health sciences libraries.

The NLM Associate Fellowship program is open to U.S. and Canadian information science professionals and recent graduates and selects between three and five associate fellows each year. A highly competitive application process ensures that only the best, most innovative professionals go through the program. Associate fellows gain a wealth of experience through a year-long residency at the National Library of Medicine; in their second year, they can choose from among the top health sciences libraries in the United States.

I've also had the honor of working with one of the few librarians in the Presidential Management Fellows program, a two-year leadership program open to recent graduates with an advanced degree. Administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, this is a highly competitive program that builds future leaders, problem solvers, and strategic thinkers through accelerated growth opportunities, including a guaranteed promotion path in two years.

As a supervisor, if I'm doing my job well, I'm getting to know my staff, learning about their goals, and fostering opportunities and challenges for each of them to help them to reach their goals. This could ultimately result in helping them find opportunities at other organizations, but could also include identifying and modifying existing roles within the current organization.

My philosophy in all cases is to provide my staff with lots of opportunities to grow into their full potential in a semi-structured format. By giving them a chance to succeed in projects that are often a "stretch" given their current experience, and scheduling regular meetings to check in and provide advice, I'm creating a safe space for them to prove their value while also developing new skills.

I've learned over time that one of my key success factors as a mentor is to schedule regular meetings in advance and guard that time to ensure that the daily grind doesn't overcome the relationship. I've also found that it's important to be open and honest with mentees, offering them frank feedback tied to suggestions for improvement. Finally, I believe it is important to give them projects to "own," setting the end goal but allowing them plenty of leeway to devise and implement a strategy to meet it.

Getting to know the mentees on a personal level—including their struggles, successes, and career goals—is important to building the trust required for a mentoring relationship. I've also found that being open to the mentees and encouraging them to provide frank feedback on how I'm doing as a mentor (and being responsive to their input) has also been valuable.

As a result of these relationships, I've not only taught each of my mentees new skills, I've also learned skills, come to appreciate new approaches, and accomplished much more than I could have on my own. I encourage all librarians to strive to give back to the library community by making yourself available to help someone newer in the profession learn from your wealth of experience. **SLA**

— Thanks to my team (Bridget Burns, MaShana Davis, Candace Norton, and Lissa Snyders) for being an inspiration and for helping with this article.

Mentoring as an Iterative Process

BY ELIZABETH TRUDELL, MLS



Elizabeth Trudell is a faculty associate with Columbia University's MS program in Information and Knowledge Strategy (IKNS). Previously, she was a longtime member of the executive team for Dialog Information Services, where her roles included strategic planning, global marketing, and product management. She can be reached at ltrudell@netbox.com.

The idea of establishing a mentoring relationship sometimes carries high expectations. Mentors may feel that the role requires imparting advice or recommending a correct career path; mentees may expect specific guidance or a set of professional connections to set them on a path.

We have probably all heard about mentoring relationships that have included these components. However, my own experience with the nature and value of mentoring has been more varied.

I have had many mentors over time who played different roles, although I often didn't recognize them as such at the time. Some were professional colleagues, some were in management, and some were friends or family members. They all shared some common characteristics: (1) they were generous with their time, (2) they were able to act as a sounding board for my questions or concerns, and (3) while sharing their own experiences and perspectives, they also listened and helped me see new connections.

Some of these interactions lasted many years, while some were quite transitory. In both cases, the crucial value gained from these mentoring relationships was support for thinking through problems or challenges. Often, I was offered a different perspective or a bigger picture, enabling me to better develop my own insights or reach decisions.

Everyone's experience with mentoring is different, and there are some people who have a few long-term or highly-engaged mentors who profoundly shape their professional develop-

ment. But I think there is a lot of value in seeking a series of smaller interactions with many different people. At a decision point in your life or career, gathering insights from people with different backgrounds and experiences may be especially valuable. Getting a mix of perspectives can help you generate a truly creative approach to a problem or gain the confidence to change your career direction.

Participating in a variety of different mentoring experiences helped me be successful in many different ways over time, with a cumulative impact. The resulting growth in my personal confidence and professional capacity certainly led to the emergence of new career opportunities.

Another aspect of this approach to mentoring is that you can be on the lookout for opportunities to offer this kind of developmental support to others. Following are a few thoughts to get you started on both paths.

Suggestions for engaging a mentor:

- Think about mentoring as an iterative process, not a one-time lucky shot.
- Don't hesitate to ask for a few minutes of someone's time. Most people are generous.
- Be open to the unexpected. Someone may become an "accidental" mentor.
- Seek out people with different experiences to help you work through a current challenge.

Suggestions for offering mentoring support:

- Have an open door and seek to promote a feeling of mutual trust.
- Listen more than you talk. Ask "Why?" and "What if?"
- Share your knowledge and experience where it's relevant.
- Offer directions for the mentee to explore rather than proposing a solution. **SLA**

The Power of Mentoring Circles

BY DENNIE HEYE, MA



Dennie Heye is a global knowledge and information manager at a Fortune 500 company. He has been a member of SLA since 1996 and was named an SLA Fellow in 2013. During his spare time he likes to participate in reading challenges, learn about art history, and build LEGO models. He can be reached at dennieheye@gmail.com.

“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.”

— John C. Crosby

During my career, I have experienced the power of mentoring by being mentored and by mentoring others. In both roles, I have learned and grown in ways I could not have foreseen.

The most powerful method of mentoring I have experienced in the past 10 years has been participating in mentoring circles. A mentoring circle consists of a small group of people headed by one senior leader from within the organization.

In the groups in which I have participated, circle members worked together with the volunteer mentor on a topic related to leadership, networking, or career development. The circles met face to face at least five (and as many as eight) times; topics were identified based on input gathered from staff discussions and feedback received from previous participants.

In my first mentoring circle, a senior manager hosted a series of meetings on building trust to achieve business results. He started by sharing some of his own successes and failures in building trust, because he had come to realize over the years that the basis of trust is to let people understand who you are, what motivates you, and what expectations you have. The more you understand each other, the easier it is to build a trusting relationship.

As this can be scary for some people, it was helpful to discuss our fears and reservations in our mentoring circle. We could be very honest in giving feedback, and we were able to build on each other's ideas. For example, when I was preparing for a difficult conversation with an influential stakeholder for my project, I was able to practice the conversation in my mentoring circle. The mentor and mentees helped me improve my confidence and work through different scenarios.

In this mentoring circle, we were all given real-life assignments to practice. During our monthly circle meetings, we would discuss our experiences, as I have outlined previously.

Compared to traditional mentoring relationships, where one mentor is connected to one mentee, a mentoring circle allows you to learn from a wider range of people. Not only do you benefit from the senior leader, you also get feedback from your fellow mentees. Just listening to their opinions and experiences contributes to your own learning and development.

Based on my experience, I would recommend one-on-one mentoring to people who want personal advice for a unique situation and mentoring circles to those who feel more comfortable tackling a topic in a group. A mentoring circle can also pay long-term dividends in the form of relationships you develop with fellow mentees.

Participating in mentoring circles also offers other benefits, as follows:

- enhancing your business and personal skills by discussing and practicing them in a safe environment;
- expanding your networks as you make business and personal connections across departments;
- gaining a broader and more insightful knowledge of the organization; and
- learning the unwritten rules and norms of your organization

Mentoring circles present a fantastic opportunity to learn from others and absorb a wide range of ideas for tackling challenges. For me, the best part of the mentoring circles was the lively exchange of ideas with the senior leader and the participants. For example, in a mentoring circle focusing on career development, one of the executive vice presidents shared personal stories about her early days in the organization. Her comments prompted us to reflect on our early experiences, after which we all agreed to partner with a new employee to help them get started.

If you are interested in starting a mentoring circle in your organization, the following link offers a good step-by-step approach: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-start-mentoring-circle-6-steps-megan-himan/>. **SLA**

Informal Mentoring Has Always Worked for Me

BY KAREN RECZEK, MLS



Karen Reczek is a program manager at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. She can be reached at Karen.reczek@nist.gov.

I have been very fortunate during my career to benefit from many informal mentoring relationships, both as a mentor and as a mentee. Informal mentoring relationships most often begin when two people meet and discover they have common interests. These types of relationships are often long lasting and tend to have a stronger emotional component and feature more frequent conversations than formal mentorships.

Mentoring seeks to provide a safe place for the mentee to share issues affecting his or her professional and personal success. Mentoring relationships focus on such things as work/life balance, self-perception (as well as how others perceive you), and how the personal influences the professional.

I have never been in a formal mentoring relationship, although I have worked with a career coach. Unlike mentoring, which is about guiding professional growth, coaching focuses on improving an individual's job performance by teaching concrete skills, such as managing more effectively, negotiating better contracts, or thinking strategically. These relationships require an expert who can teach another person to develop specific skills.

Coaching lasts as long as is needed, depending on the purpose. Once the coachee successfully acquires the specific skills, the coach is no longer needed. Mentoring's purpose, on the other hand, is to develop the individual not only for his/her current job, but for any possible future jobs or career.

Mentoring is always a long-term relationship; to be successful, it requires time for both partners to learn about one another and build a climate of mutual trust and respect. In an informal mentor/mentee relationship, one person takes on the role of listening and providing advice and guidance. The mentor can be a boss, a teacher, a neighbor, a colleague—anyone with whom you can comfortably share feelings and experiences.

I have never actually asked anyone to serve as a mentor; each mentoring relationship just happened naturally. I have established a network of mentors (as opposed to relying on one primary mentor) and have developed strong connections through these relationships.

Different people bring different perspectives to the relationship, and their disparate (or consensus) views can be helpful in influencing your decisions and furthering your professional growth. I feel blessed to have had a couple of good mentors during my career who have helped me clarify my career goals and identify my strengths and weaknesses. I still rely on these people today, and I know that some people rely on me the same way.

I have never set any specific goals (as you normally would in a formal mentoring arrangement), but instead have used mentors to provide just-in-time advice on specific topics (e.g., a problem with my boss or a possible job change). I take advantage of the SLA Annual Conference to catch up with folks and get advice from those whose opinions I value, and sometimes I'll pick up the phone and ask a mentor if he or she has time to talk through something with me.

My mentors have helped me in many ways:

- identifying obstacles to my career progression and actions I can take to respond;
- providing feedback (negative and positive) on my behavior and how it might be affecting my performance or ability to advance; and
- serving as a role model in terms of demonstrating professional behaviors.

If you're looking for support and career advice, reach out to a colleague you respect and with whom you have common interests and begin developing that relationship today. And if you are not already doing so, think about someone you might want to mentor. I promise you won't be disappointed. **SLA**

RESOURCES

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Mentoring: A Win-Win Situation

BY RUTH KNEALE, MLS



Ruth Kneale is the systems librarian for the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope, part of the National Solar Observatory. An SLA member since library school, Ruth has held leadership positions with the Physics-Astronomy-Math and IT Divisions and the Arizona Chapter, and recently served on the SLA Board of Directors as division cabinet chair. She can be reached at rkneale@nso.edu.

I've been lucky enough to be on both sides of the mentoring partnership in my life, and from either side, it was a winning situation.

My first experience being mentored was in high school, applying for military scholarships. Two female Air Force captains took me under their wings and guided me on everything from the physical fitness tests to the essay writing. They also gave me invaluable advice on being a woman in the military and being a junior officer in the military, and they shared other insights I would need in the future. Thanks to them, I earned a scholarship—and went on to put all of their advice to work in my military experience.

That experience directly led to my second mentor, my undergraduate advisor in astrophysics. He let me rant and rave in his office about classes, helped me figure out spherical trigonometry, and allowed me to bounce ideas and thoughts off him even after graduation, when I'd moved into the world of observatory construction. His mentoring was critical to my astronomy career.

My third mentor was my advisor in graduate school. When I decided I wanted to pursue a degree in library and information science and boldly walked into the school, the front office staff asked me my background and then sent me to "the techy professor." He saved my degree several times, especially when I was struggling with the philosophy of librarianship—he convinced me to stay in the program and introduced me to special librarians and SLA. I directly credit him with my involvement in SLA, and I still talk to him about ideas and concepts in special libraries.

Post-graduate school, when I was floundering as a newbie librarian in Hawaii, I was lucky enough to find valuable new mentors. The other observatory librarians in Hawaii were a godsend. Not only did they help me figure out things I didn't learn about in library school (like book jobbers and where to order spine labels), they also helped me understand what it really means to be an observatory librarian, what it takes to really serve your user group, and the power of networking.

One year, I picked up an SLA mentor in, of all places, a cab on the way to Internet Librarian. He not only encouraged me to get involved in my division during my first few years in the association, he cheered on my public presentations and acted as a reviewer for some of my first publications. As time went on, I found other mentors in SLA who encouraged me to get involved at a higher level and provided advice and input whenever I sought it. (They still do!)

After a few years, my SLA mentors all encouraged me to get involved in student mentoring, as the University of Arizona library school had an SLA student group at the time. I started making presentations at the beginning of each semester about special libraries and SLA, introducing many students to the concept of librarianship outside of academia. For several years, I acted as a mentor for students who were interested in learning more about special librarianship; thanks to SLA, I was able to connect many of them with other librarians in their areas of interest. I'm happy to report that I've stayed in touch with many of them post-graduation as they've moved into their own experiences as librarians.

I still call on my mentors for advice and stay in touch with those I was lucky enough to mentor. For me, all of these relationships have been successful, both because of what I learned and because I've been able to help others. It's a situation I recommend pursuing—who knows how you might benefit from it, or how you might benefit others? **SLA**

Letting Go of Control

BY TARA E. MURRAY, MLIS



Tara Murray is librarian for Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures at the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State). She can be reached at tem10@psu.edu.

I first met David Straight during my interview for a job at the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL). David was participating in the interview primarily because he was an avid philatelist (aka stamp collector) and had served on the boards of both the library and its partner organization, the American Philatelic Society. Outside of stamp collecting, though, David was also a librarian—at Washington University in St. Louis—and he brought his professional expertise to his volunteer work with philatelic libraries.

Following the interview, I was offered and accepted the job as director of the APRL. When I started work, David immediately became a mentor and supporter for me. Although neither of us used the word *mentoring* at the time, it was clear that David wanted to help me succeed in my new role, and I knew I needed a knowledgeable guide. The world of philately was completely new to me, and David, an avid philatelic researcher and writer, helped me understand the language of this world and the kinds of information that are important to philatelic researchers. He introduced me to people he thought I needed to know, from ephemera and literature dealers to museum curators to big money collectors.

What made this mentoring relationship so successful for me, though, was what David did not do. He did not tell me how to run my library or attempt to control the library's operation. Despite his own expertise as a librarian, he stepped back and let me do my own thing, including making some mistakes along the way. This was crucial in helping me gain confidence in a position that, I soon learned, had a very high profile in the philatelic world. It also helped establish trust between us. I knew that in David I had someone I could turn to for advice, but also someone who respected my own growing professional knowledge.

Although David was not active in SLA himself, he recognized the value of SLA and encouraged me to continue my involvement. I needed the encouragement, because none of the other staff in my new organization were active in professional associations. He also supported my leadership of a group he had helped found, the Philatelic Librarians Roundtable. Because the roundtable is a loose, ungoverned group, David could have easily, even accidentally, emerged as its leader. Instead, he stepped back and let me lead.

Tragically, this mentoring relationship was cut short after just two years when David died unexpectedly at the age of 57. What I learned from it has stayed with me, even as I've moved on to a new position outside of philately and developed my own mentoring relationships. The satisfaction of serving as a mentor is in seeing your mentee succeed, and in order for that to happen, you have to let go of any attempt to control. **SLA**

10 Questions: Cynthia Sheffield

STARTING A LIBRARY FROM SCRATCH WAS JUST A PRELUDE TO CYNTHIA SHEFFIELD'S LATEST CHALLENGE—HELPING RESEARCHERS FIND A CURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

BY STUART HALES

Many librarians developed their “itch” by visiting libraries or bookstores as children, browsing the stacks and perhaps even plopping themselves down on the floor to flip through the books they’d pulled off the shelves. That’s how Cynthia Sheffield got interested in librarianship—but she was an adult, working toward a graduate degree in business.

“While I was working on my final paper for my MBA, I paid a babysitter to watch my two small children at home on a beautiful Saturday so I could go to the Johns Hopkins Library on the Homewood campus to do research,” she says. “Hopkins doesn’t have a library science program, but they have a huge collection of library science books. I found myself sitting on the floor in the stacks surrounded by about 30 books I had pulled from the shelves, by people like Carol Tenopir and all sorts of well-known library authors. I had been there for about 90 minutes when I realized I had taken this Alice in Wonderland-type dive into a rabbit hole, where I was fascinated and energized by what I was learning—instead

of working on my final paper.”

Early jobs at medical libraries at Johns Hopkins led to a career in health sciences librarianship, including her current position managing an Alzheimer’s database at the National Institute on Aging. Along the way, she joined SLA and honed her leadership skills with the Maryland Chapter and the Biomedical & Life Sciences Division.

Information Outlook spoke with Cynthia shortly after she returned from attending the SLA Leadership Symposium in New Orleans.

You’ve had a long and interesting career in librarianship, but before we delve into that, let’s talk about your current position. For the past three years, you’ve been managing an Alzheimer’s database with the National Institutes of Health. You seem very passionate about

this project. Why is that?

The Alzheimer’s Preclinical Efficacy Database, or AlzPED, brings together aspects of librarianship that drew me to the field: evidence-based medicine and text mining. It lets me work with great scientists who support several projects tied to finding cures for Alzheimer’s. I also get to work with great librarians who offer collegial solutions as I encounter various challenges. And some of my passion comes from having had personal experiences with Alzheimer’s disease.

I work directly with program directors at the National Institutes on Aging. I know how hard they work to identify the right projects and ensure rigor is used to develop and report on AD research. They’re taking a comprehensive approach to overcoming barriers to



STUART HALES is content director at SLA and editor of *Information Outlook*.

progress that have been seen over the past decades.

For example, Dr. Lorezo Refolo and Dr. Suzana Petanceska, along with other program directors at NIA, are supporting a portfolio of programs that are specific to issues that have made



Cindy Sheffield

drug discovery elusive. To name a few of these projects: MODEL-AD addresses fit-for-use animal models to properly emulate the Alzheimer's disease process; ADNI houses imaging data from multiple studies; AMP-AD, which stands for Accelerating Medicines Partnership, is a portal for AD-related data, analysis results, methodologies, and research tools; and IADRP, International Alzheimer's Disease Research Portfolio, looks at who has invested in what research, from a global perspective.

The NIH Library has a great group of talented librarians. James King is a branch chief who oversees several services areas, including Custom Information Solutions, which is where the AlzPED project falls. Other areas of the library where I have an interest include data visualization, bioinformatics, and bibliometrics. I like being able to work with this group collaboratively,

learning from peers and gleaning ideas that can be applied to AlzPED. I am rarely at the library, as I sit in an NIA space, but love that I can work with NIH librarians from time to time.

Given the efforts under way at NIA, I'm encouraged that substantial progress will be made toward effective treatments in my lifetime. My brother-in-law passed from AD, and my mother is in late stages now. Working at NIH, where there is an emphasis on rigor and reproducibility in translational medicine, and with my personal experiences with AD, I'm emboldened to find creative ways to get the word out about AlzPED. The information model within AlzPED allows research investigators to quickly assess previous studies and publish results not typically accepted by publications, and it gives data scientists the ability to explore the level of rigor within this subset of literature.

OK, now let's go back to the beginning. You've been a librarian for more than 25 years, but before earning your library degree, you earned an MBA in human resources development. What prompted you to pursue that degree, and how have you used it in your work and career?

I was working at Johns Hopkins University as an accounts payable analyst in the Department of Anesthesiology & Critical Care Medicine, or ACCM. I had planned to pursue a business degree, and I wanted to look at the human resources aspects of business, mainly because of my interest in lifelong learning and because people are always the most valuable resource in any organization. I think that's what attracted me to that specific sector of the Johns Hopkins MBA program.

While I was earning that degree, I ended up working in ACCM's library. Eventually I ended up with a job at the Welch Medical Library at Hopkins, working at the reference desk. I found that the MBA helped me understand various learning styles at a deeper level, which enabled me to become more effective at reference interviews. They teach you many things about reference

interviews in library school, but I believe the MBA taught me to think about the business need behind the questions being asked and about the paths that individuals were trying to take to meet those business needs.

Working at the reference desk also gave me a better understanding of the points where people would get stuck in their quest for answers. Whether it was determining which resource to use or how to use a particular interface, I noticed people would get stuck at similar points in their research. So I would answer the same types of questions several times a week.

This prompted me to take on teaching—to help people overcome common barriers to finding information. I started by teaching Medline, then PubMed, and then I added a couple of other classes. Other colleagues had topics they wanted to teach, and things evolved and we ended up with a very nice information literacy program. Jayne Campbell was a great mentor and paved the way for many of these opportunities to happen.

So you earned your MBA degree, then went back to school for an MLS. When and why did you decide to become a librarian?

I was working at Welch and finishing up my MBA, and at about the same time, two things happened. First, I took a good look at my résumé and asked myself, What would you hire this person to do? And the answer was, I would hire this person to work in a library. I was mulling that thought over during the last couple of months of my MBA.

Then, while I was working on my final paper for my MBA, I paid a babysitter to watch my two small children at home on a beautiful Saturday so I could go to the Johns Hopkins Library on the Homewood campus to do research. Hopkins doesn't have a library science program, but they have a huge collection of library science books. I found myself sitting on the floor in the stacks surrounded by about 30 books I had pulled from the shelves, by people like Carol Tenopir and all sorts of well-known library authors.



Cindy cruises out of Miami in 2014, on her way to Cozumel.



Cindy named her rescue dog Wookie, because she looks like an Ewok.

I had been there for about 90 minutes when I realized I had taken this Alice in Wonderland-type dive into a rabbit hole, where I was fascinated and energized by what I was learning—instead of working on my final paper. That moment, I decided, I'm a geek. It's time to finish my MBA and then go get that MLS! Nancy Roderer implemented a tuition reimbursement program at Welch around the same time, which made the whole adventure seem serendipitous.

Including your job at Welch, you've worked in a variety of biomedical and medical libraries and institutes. Did you always intend to become a health sciences librarian?

Once I decided to pursue an MLS, I knew I would stay within health sciences. We had great mentors in clinical medicine teaching us about evidence-based medicine, and I learned all that I could. Additionally, back in the late 1980s, when I first learned about medical subject headings and discovered they were 16-digit numbers that represented nested tree structures, I thought that was pure genius! I also found Eugene Garfield's Science Citation Index fascinating.

In my quest to learn how to search more effectively, I came across Liz Liddy's research in text mining. That's when I knew I wanted to enroll in Syracuse's iSchool program, which I started in 2000 and finished in 2001.

You worked at the Welch Medical Library for about 15 years, and since then you've spent much of your career working with library organizations that contract with government agencies. Why did you make the switch, and do you ever think about leaving con-

tract work and going back to a direct employment arrangement?

At Welch, I was very much on the service side of the library, but I was very interested in learning about the technical side of libraries. Battelle was opening up a biomedical countermeasures center in Frederick, Maryland, for the Department of Homeland Security and needed to have a library built from scratch. I loved Frederick, and I thought starting a new library would be a great opportunity to learn different aspects of librarianship—and it was.

Creating a library must have been a challenging project, and I'm sure it taught you a lot about libraries. But I'm curious: What did you learn about yourself?

One thing I came to understand fairly quickly is that I had learned a lot at Hopkins. I had good mentors in both librarianship and in the sciences. I worked with some fairly savvy folks at Battelle as well, and I was able to hold my own in a fast-paced, "solve these problems yesterday" type of environment. I also learned I really needed to trust my gut and follow through on my instincts.

I had really good leaders who trusted me and the knowledge I was bringing to the organization. I worked with a team of microbiologists, and I enjoyed being in the thick of the scientific pursuit. I also found it very rewarding to meet new colleagues in other libraries and learn how we could collaborate on initiatives across organizations. It can be a win-win for everyone involved.

Let's talk about SLA for a minute. Why did you join SLA, and what do you get out of it?

I joined SLA when I moved to the Battelle National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center. I knew there were a lot of things on the technical side that I was going to need to pick up quickly. I figured the more people I knew in similar roles, the better. As one of my favorite mentors at Hopkins used to say, there's evidence-based, and

then there's eminence-based. I wanted to meet as many techies as I could.

But I've gotten far more than technical advice from SLA. I've made several meaningful friendships and had the pleasure of working with some of the most dedicated, creative, kind, and talented folks you would want to meet in librarianship. I should also note that, in essence, I got a whole fellowship in marketing from Chris Olson as she took me under her wing when I moved into leadership roles in the Maryland Chapter of SLA. That mentorship was extremely invaluable in so many ways.

Speaking of the Maryland Chapter, you served as chapter president in 2012. What was your most memorable moment as president, and what would you do differently if you had to do it over again?

I have lots of great memories of working with the Maryland Chapter. My most memorable chapter moment, however, was when I was past president for the second year, and we hosted the "Leveraging Data to Lead" symposium in 2015.

The night before the symposium, I had a million things to do, and I was in the auditorium working with Nancy Faget and the facilities staff learning all of the particulars for the AV. There were some glitches and lots of questions, and it was taking much longer than I had anticipated. I had a million things racing through my mind—I was worried about all of the things in my car that needed to be unloaded and all of the small things that needed to get done that evening, like placing the badges out, preparing for the vendors that were sponsoring the event, and having the bandwidth to cover any other "unexpecteds" that always occur.

When I came out of the auditorium, the rest of the LDL Planning Committee had arrived, my car had been completely unloaded, and most of the tasks had been done! There were only a few key things left, like setting our sponsorship recognition slides to automate within PowerPoint, and a couple of

other final things. I was so relieved! Then I couldn't remember how to set our sponsorship slides to automate, but Annette Haldeman and Jill Konieczko's 10-year-old son, Caleb, figured it out within minutes. Before we knew it, all 12 computers were set up and we were ready to leave for the evening. I remember driving home feeling so blessed to work with such an incredible team of dedicated professionals.

As for doing anything differently, I can't think of anything. I completely enjoyed all of the events we hosted.

What do you do when you aren't "librarianing"? What are your hobbies and interests?



Cindy (seated, at center) at a bibliometrics event hosted by the NIH Library and the Maryland Chapter of SLA. Troy Taylor of Zimmerman Associates, Inc. was one of the sponsors.

Well, I love to walk my dog. We have a regular route in the park that we go on during the week, when the weather's nice.

I try to work out at least once a week. I also enjoy simply watching movies with my husband. We're both pretty busy and pretty active, so it doesn't leave us a lot of free time.

We enjoy cycling in the summer. We're headed to Costa Rica in February

and plan to hike, cycle, and boat while we are there.

As you look back on your career, what skills or insights that you didn't learn in library school have had the greatest impact on your success?

Listening skills are invaluable for so many reasons. Perspectives can be distorted for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is as simple as semantics, and restating the situation in different words leads to resolutions.

Opportunities are like surfing waves—if you miss one, don't sweat it. Sometimes there is an even bigger, better opportunity just behind the one you thought you wanted.



Stay Current with Awareness Techniques

Researchers wanting to stay informed about developments in their field can use a few methods that do not require time-intensive scanning of subject journals.

BY DAVID STERN, MLS

According to many studies, one of the greatest challenges researchers face is how to remain current in their field. Currency is not just concerned with the latest research updates—it also involves uncovering new tools, techniques, and best practices and perhaps even important research collaborations.

Researchers striving to remain current confront two big obstacles: their time is precious, and an enormous amount of information is released and published every day. In terms of discovery, each discipline has its own unique community characteristics and associated information-seeking behaviors.

Networking is the name of the game for remaining current. Networking effectiveness, however, often depends upon both (1) the researcher's level of expertise and extent of integration into the research community, and (2) the research community's size and communication characteristics. No wonder staying current with rapidly changing developments in research can be a complex endeavor!

Most researchers agree that the most effective way to remain aware of new developments in their field is to participate in conference conversations and online communities that discuss research in progress. Travel costs can

limit participation in the former, so many people rely on the latter for networking. E-print and pre-print servers (e.g., arXiv) can help researchers maintain awareness of published materials, while conference blogs can help identify hot topics and important players.

These may be effective methods for well-connected researchers, but it is not always easy for new researchers to become embedded in these niche communities. Many people supplement these awareness mechanisms by scanning relevant journals. This approach may be feasible if there are a discrete and manageable number of key journals, but this scenario is becoming less likely every year as interdisciplinary research becomes more common.

For those who do not have the luxury of scanning just a few niche journals, here are a few alternative methods for staying current.

Auto-alerts. Most search tools allow for the creation of auto-alerts. When new material is added to a database, saved search strategies are run, identifying new materials that contain selected key terms and/or author names. This “push” technology makes discovery effortless and immediate. Alerts can be sent as e-mail results or viewed as an RSS feed within a reader. You

can see an example of my library's auto-alert page at <http://lib.sxu.edu/c.php?g=301926&p=2013866>.

Citation tracking. Tools such as Web of Science, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar allow researchers to follow research developments by tracking citations of key articles and/or authors that are already known. These tools also allow you to perform a subject search and identify high-impact articles in a field; the articles are then used as a basis for tracking citations of these seminal works over time. These types of citation tracking methods can also be set up as automatic alerts to be run against new data.

Researchers striving to remain current confront two big obstacles: their time is precious, and an enormous amount of information is released and published every day.

Starting new research. One other method requires taking a slightly different approach to discovery and awareness. This alternative method, which is used when someone is looking to become current in a new research area, encompasses the techniques described previously as well as other discovery processes that can be effective when exploring a new research area. For example, many subject databases provide a system for identifying “review” articles—those having longi-

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Catch Them While You Can

Orientations for new employees present librarians with invaluable opportunities to market their services and build lasting relationships.

BY KAREN G. WHITE, MLS, MA

The new-employee orientation is a well-known rite of passage in most organizations. The new employee learns about the history and structure of the organization, fills out health and insurance forms, and is briefed about the payroll system.

For special librarians, the new employee orientation is also an opportunity to let new employees know that the library exists and that our services will help them succeed. If your library is not yet included in new employee orientations, talk to the human resources manager about being included, even if only for five minutes. It's amazing how much of an impact you can make in a short time, especially if you keep your message focused.

Most orientations, however, contain a fatal flaw: so much information is presented at one time that participants retain very little of it. For example, one study found that orientation participants typically remember only 15 percent of the material presented on the first day.¹ If the orientation lasts several hours, with presentations from many different departments, you've got to make sure your message stands out.

By the time a new employee has been with the organization for 90 days, she knows what her business challenges are and what kinds of information will help her.

Following are some simple tips to ensure that your orientation message is remembered:

Be very selective about what you share. Don't attempt to describe your entire collection or services in one presentation; instead, plant a seed. For example, if your audience consists of economists, tell them you've got passwords to the digital versions of *The Economist* or *The Wall Street Journal* to share. They'll remember!

Develop a catchy phrase that the

orientation participants will remember.

Don't be afraid to be a little nutty. One librarian I knew always finished with, "We're your key to survival!"

If you have a printed brochure, hand out copies. Say, "If you've got to search for more than 10 minutes, e-mail or call us and we'll do the research for you."

Ask the new employees to share their e-mail addresses with you, either directly or by signing up for the library blog or your new acquisition list. (The Human Resources Office may be willing to provide the e-mail addresses to you.)

Now that you've got their e-mail addresses, make the best possible use of them. Invite new employees to join your book club; send them news about new commercial databases; advertise training sessions. If you know the departments in which the new employees work, send them messages tailored to their precise needs. For instance, send lawyers notices about Westlaw training and send supervisors notices about Leadership & Management Source training.

It's also a good idea to try to reinforce what you presented during the orientation by following up 90 days later with an e-mail that is customized to each employee's particular responsibilities. By the time a new employee has been with the organization for 90 days, she knows what her business challenges are and what kinds of information will help her. For instance, the organization's top management may need competitive intelligence, while mid-level supervisors may need information about how best to manage virtual teams. Tailor your e-mail to highlight the specific services, collaboration tools, or e-resources that may be helpful.

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STRUCTURING LIBRARY PRESENTATIONS AROUND EMPLOYEES' CAREERS

A library in an international organization was allotted 30 minutes to present its services to a group of new employees who would be stationed in various overseas countries. At first, the library team used a PowerPoint deck organized by library function (such as research, knowledge management, and database training). Then, a bright librarian suggested structuring the presentation around the future careers of these outward-bound employees. This career-oriented structure made the presentation deeply memorable.

At this organization, each new employee moved through the following predictable stages:

1. learning about the organization;
2. receiving a first-country assignment;
3. taking a foreign language immersion course;
4. arriving in the assigned overseas location; and
5. using database training, literature searches, knowledge management tools, and other library services to succeed.

The new PowerPoint presentation, "Meet Sandra," was based on the actual career of a young woman at the organization. Sandra used library services heavily while preparing for her first assignment. After completing her foreign language course, she used the library's Rosetta Stone resources to study for her language examination. Upon reaching her first post in Kiev, Ukraine, she received training from the library team on using videoconferencing and online collaboration tools. When it was time for Sandra to write her first report, she learned how to submit reports to the institutional repository.

All it took to develop the presentation was an amateur photographer with a camera and a librarian to write the story line. Before she left on her first assignment, we posed Sandra participating in a videoconference, receiving database training, and submitting her report to the repository. We used an airbrush to create a backdrop of Kiev to make the photos more convincing. We used members of the actual library team as the other "actors."

The presentation was a tremendous success. The new employees related to Sandra because they knew they would be experiencing all of the same steps. When the real Sandra returned to the organization for a conference, people recognized her ("You're Sandra!") as she walked through the lobby or used the elevator. She soon grew accustomed to being a celebrity!

Info Tech

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tudinal reviews and summaries of primary research on a topic. Many fields even have entire journals dedicated to reviews, either on an annual basis or by topic on a rotating basis.

In addition to finding the most current publications on your topic, you can use the same citation databases mentioned previously to discover the most frequently cited articles in a field, then track developments in the field using the associated citations. It is also possible to use these same powerful citation databases for additional analyses of a field based upon search results. You can identify important organizations, key authors, patterns of publications over time, and even the most important journals in your area. These analyses can provide fascinating perspectives on disciplines over time.

(Finally, in a new and not entirely integrated awareness network, standard bibliometric analysis can be supplemented using social media altmetrics data for additional tracking of network communication.)

As you can see, there are many ways to effectively identify current developments in a field that do not require time-intensive scanning of many subject journals. Setting up these types of automatic notifications can provide scholars with important competitive advantages over those who fail to remain current. **SLA**